



NASA's Museum & Informal Education Alliance – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Museum & Informal Education Alliance?

The Museum & Informal Education (MIE) Alliance (pronounced “My Alliance”) is a community of practice comprising informal science educators at museums, science centers, planetariums, NASA Visitor Centers, Learning Centers, observatories, libraries, parks, nature centers, and more, who wish to share NASA information with their visitors.

It is intended to bring current NASA science and technology to visitors through professional development of the museums’ staff, notice of NASA events, access to NASA experts, educational materials, etc.

It is a free service and the only requirements are that you be a staff member or registered volunteer at an informal education institution, respect all embargoes on pre-released news items, and report to us on a quarterly basis how you use the information we provide.

Who is eligible to participate in the Alliance?

The Alliance is intended for staff at institutions that meet the following requirements:

- Are a legally organized public or private non-profit institution or part of a non-profit organization or government entity;
- Are essentially educational in nature;
- Use and interpret objects, images, and/or a site for the public presentation of regularly scheduled programs and exhibits;
- Carry out the above functions primarily at a physical facility/site; and
- Have at least one paid or unpaid professional staff person with museum knowledge and experience.

Do I have to be from a museum?

The American Alliance of Museums’ Code of Ethics states:

“Museums make their unique contribution to the public by collecting, preserving and interpreting the things of this world.” It also acknowledges the variety of sizes and types of museums, “Their numbers include both governmental and private museums of anthropology, art history and natural history, aquariums, arboreta, art centers, botanical gardens, children’s museums, historic sites, nature centers, planetariums, science and technology centers, and zoos.” To this we add NASA Visitor Centers, Challenger Learning Centers and observatory visitor centers, as well as aviation museums and park visitor centers. The Code also notes “The museum universe in the United States includes both collecting and non-collecting institutions. Although diverse in their missions, they have in common their nonprofit form of organization and a commitment of service to the public. Their collections and/or the objects they borrow or fabricate are the basis for

research, exhibits, and programs that invite public participation.” (Reference: <http://www.aam-us.org/resources/ethics-standards-and-best-practices/code-of-ethics-for-museums>)

How can I register?

Fill out the application form at <https://informal.jpl.nasa.gov/museum/About/Application>.

What happens after I submit the application form?

After the team reviews and approves your application, you will be sent a “Welcome!” email. You will also start receiving our weekly messages and have access to the member-only, password-protected **Museum & Informal Education Alliance** webpages.

Are there any other requirements for membership?

We request your reports on how you use NASA images, content and other information. The simple online report form (“Event Submission”) on the internal Alliance website asks for basic information about your activities, including approximate audience numbers. It is important for us to have this data in order to respond to inquiries from NASA Headquarters and other entities such as the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

What types of activities should I report?

We want to share how you use NASA content, whether or not it came directly from the Museum & Informal Education Alliance. That includes images, videos, stories, and educational resources in your galleries, exhibits, and multimedia shows, as well as student activities, teacher professional development, public programming, and special events. However, please do not report your fund-raising events (e.g., your annual gala). And you should not double report if you already report to another NASA program.

Is there any penalty if I don’t report?

We request information on your NASA-related events, so we can demonstrate the effective use of public funds to NASA Headquarters through providing the infrastructure and data. Without your help in this reporting, our partnership will not be able to show the benefits.

What’s in it [the reporting] for us?

The public website <https://informal.jpl.nasa.gov/museum/> is currently set up to advertise your organization’s events and activities. Visitors can see what is going on by location or by chronology, enabling them to plan to visit your facility. Conversely, we can show our NASA sponsors that you—our customers—are using the services and materials we provide. To advertise your event, login to the internal Museum & Informal Education Alliance website and select the “Event Submission form.”

What if I don’t want to advertise a certain event (e.g, private events, registration is full, etc.)?

We’d still like to share the information internally at NASA. We look over and approve all event postings before they go public, so simply indicate in the event description if you’d prefer not to

post this particular event publicly. Note that the form does have an option to mark your event as “Open to the General Public” or not, and you can always submit events after they have passed.

Will my venue appear on the Museum & Informal Education Alliance map?

Yes, twice! When your registration is approved, your organization will be added to the map of MIE Alliance partners (<https://informal.jpl.nasa.gov/museum/Connect>). When you submit an activity, the location of the event will be added to the map of MIE Alliance partners’ activities (<https://informal.jpl.nasa.gov/museum/Visit>).

How does this all work?

Navigating NASA’s extensive resources can be daunting. The Museum & Informal Education Alliance team provides a human connection and assistance for informal educators looking to bring NASA to their diverse audiences. To do so, we use the following tools:

- Member website – hosts a searchable library of files and lists of resources for members to use
- Collaborative Team Chat forum – acts as a hub to connect with the team as well as other members
- Calendar of events – includes NASA events, as well as opportunity deadlines and fun anniversaries
- Member-only live briefings – NASA experts tell you about their current work and answer your questions
- Weekly member message

Plus, always feel free to ask directly whenever you’re seeking specific resources or help.

How does Team Chat work?

Think of it as a free, on-demand conference where you can network and share resources and best practices with your informal educator peers. It features forums about planetariums, exhibits and models, Apollo anniversaries, and more. The entire history of conversations is searchable. There’s no install required, and once you’re set up, you can respond to posts directly via email notifications.

Members can find instructions on how to access the team chat here:

<https://informal.jpl.nasa.gov/museum/content/team-chat-tutorial>.

How do the live briefings (webinars) work?

They are announced via the MIE Alliance weekly message and posted on the Museum Alliance internal website.

Typically, we provide at least a week’s notice, but occasionally may schedule a “Breaking News” webinar on short notice. If you are unable to join in live, the recordings will be available later. The announcement will include a link for you to log in to the online meeting; you will be able to see the slides progress and hear the speaker(s). If you do not have internet access, we also include phone in-only options. The speakers’ slides are available in advance so you can move through them as you listen. You will be able to ask questions via online or phone.

Keep in mind the webinars are intended for your professional development as a Museum & Informal Education Alliance partner, to help you prepare for upcoming events and presentations. They are NOT to be shared live or as recordings in classrooms, museums or other venues,

including social media (tweeting, blogging, etc.) Please do not share the link or phone number outside of your organization.

Will I get presentation materials?

Yes, any presentation materials used in the briefings will be available for your use, trusting that you will use them appropriately in your own presentations. If you have trouble finding or accessing materials, simply ask.

Are there any restrictions on how I can use NASA images?

Once images are released to the public, you may show them to audiences, put them on websites, or print them. Images may include a credit line, which we ask that you retain. If you wish to make a commercial product, please refer to JPL's image use policy at

<http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/images/policy/> and be aware that you may need to sign a license agreement with the California Institute of Technology (which manages JPL for NASA).

Likewise, be aware of the NASA Media Usage

Guidelines: <https://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/guidelines/index.html>.

Are there any restrictions on using images or information labeled as “embargoed”?

Yes! You may not use the images or information for public distribution until the date and time indicated on the Museum & Informal Education Alliance internal website. You and your staff may ready them for use, however, as long as you do not display them before NASA releases them to the public.

Is there any penalty for ignoring the embargo?

Yes! Your institution will lose access to the Alliance, and such privileges for all other institutions may be jeopardized by the actions of a few. We appreciate your diligence on this issue and your help in building trust in our partnership.

Can I get “stuff”?

NASA has moved to reduce waste by doing less printing and shipping, and instead focus on sharing digital files to let you print your own materials as needed. That said, when we have physical items to share, we will use the Team Chat and weekly message to alert you to the opportunity.

Are there other ways of staying up to date?

Visit <http://www.nasa.gov/> for the latest NASA news and/or find social media accounts to follow at <https://www.nasa.gov/socialmedia>.

You may also want to enroll in the NASA Education's Express E-mail service (<https://www.nasa.gov/stem/express>).

For automatic notification of competitive opportunities for scientific and technical research, program management and administration, and other announcements, please register with NSPIRES at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/external/>.

How did the Museum & Informal Education Alliance start?

The Alliance began in 2002 as the “Mars Museum Visualization Alliance”, or “Mars Viz,” a partnership between JPL’s Informal Education Office, the robotic Mars Exploration Program, the Space Science Visualization project, and museums, science centers, and planetariums across the country to bring the adventure of exploring Mars to students, educators, and the public. Due to the success of “Mars Viz”, the model was expanded to include other NASA content areas such as space science, Earth science, human exploration, microgravity, aeronautics research, and technology, and renamed the Museum Alliance. In 2020, the name was changed to the Museum & Informal Education (MIE) Alliance to better reflect the diversity of our member organizations.

In Summary . . .

We are continuously improving and expanding the Alliance. We value you as a community of informal science educators who are dedicated to bringing current science and technology to your audiences. We look forward to continued feedback from you on focus areas that interest you most, and will seek to expand in those areas. Please remember to list your NASA-related events and exhibits on our website so the public has quick and easy access to your information!